

March 27, 2001

San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

Meeting Summary Hydrology Committee January 31, 2001

Welcome and Introductions: Errol Jensen, Committee Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members and the audience introduced themselves. Members in attendance included:

Member

Errol Jensen

Dale Wirth

Ron Bliesner

Dave Frick

Steve Cullinan

Bill Miller

Rick Cox

Steve Harris

Ray Alvarado

John Whipple

Representing

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs

Jicarilla Apache Tribe

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Water Development

Water Development

State of Colorado

State of New Mexico

Action items that came up in the meeting are shown in bold italics text.

It was noted that Andreas Krause is leaving the Navajo Nation for a job elsewhere and will no longer be representing them at the Hydrology Committee. John Leeper will take his place.

Review and Approve Agenda: A discussion about the policy statement that was approved at the November 14, 2000 meeting was added to the agenda.

Review and Approval of November 14, 2000 Meeting Summary: A review of the minutes revealed some minor changes to the document. Dan Israel is not considered the official representative for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. We are waiting for a letter from the Tribe designating their representative. Other editorial changes were made at the meeting. The meeting summary was approved as amended.

Hydrology Committee Proposal: Errol Jensen discussed the Hydrology Committee proposal that was submitted to the Coordination Committee on January 30. Randy Seaholm had a few minor changes to the proposal that the Hydrology Committee had approved. There were some questions about the Corps of Engineers role in operation of Navajo Dam. *Pat Page will take the concern back to the Bureau of Reclamation to ensure the wording in the document is sufficient to address the concern.*

Policy Statement on Model Software: Policy Statement 2000-1 “Concerning Model Software” was approved at the November 14, 2000 Hydrology Committee meeting. John Whipple had concerns about calling it the “San Juan Recovery Implementation Program Model” because it is not the Program model, but rather it was used for Animas/LaPlata and the Navajo Dam EIS. Ron Bliesner stated that the purpose of the model was to analyze the hydrology and support the analysis of the flow recommendations. The model is the same, the configurations are different. It was suggested and approved that the name of the model be changed to the San Juan Basin Hydrology Model.

There were further discussions about the use of the model. At the time the Hydrology Committee was formed, that model configuration had been updated from the one that had been used by the Biology Committee. It was clarified that this is all the same model, but we have used different configurations at different times. *Steve Harris will make the necessary corrections to the Policy Statement.*

Coordination Committee Meeting Summary: Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator, provided a brief summary of the January 30 Coordination Committee meeting.

Status Of San Juan River Basin RIP Funding: An update on the funding for the Hydrology Committee was given. The Western Area Power Administration had budgeted \$6 million for operations last year and spent over \$50 million which meant they were having difficulty funding their portion of the budget. Things have been sorted out and they are going to honor the baseline funding, which means the Hydrology Committee’s proposal is fully funded.

Dick Kreiner discussed the possibility of helping to fund the Turley/Manzanares ditch to help them stabilize their banks. The Corps of Engineers and the Interstate Stream Commission are proposing to put them into the acequia system. The Corps needs a matching 12 ½ percent to work further on the project. The design cost is approximately \$200,000, so a match of \$20,000 or so is needed.

Model documentation: Comments have been received from only a couple of committee members so far. The documentation is already obsolete as we are just documenting the history of the model. *Comments on the model documentation are due to Errol Jensen by February 28, 2001 for finalization at the next meeting in March.*

Mini Model: The Bureau of Reclamation has not received any comments on the mini model so far. It has been a very effective tool to help the Bureau of Reclamation, even for the low flow test. It models what the diversions need to get out of the system during high demand and determines the remaining flow in the river. The data sets (river balance and canals) agree pretty well.

There were some concerns with the adequacy of the spreadsheet of the mini model. Very little real data for a couple of days was used to determine the need. The assumptions in irrigated acreage does not match New Mexico's figures. It was stated that it was important to do the mini model in conjunction with actual low flow test. *Please provide comments to John Simons.*

Low Flow Test: The Bureau of Reclamation is planning a low flow test this summer. Letters are being sent out to individuals up and down the river to get them involved with the test. Some people are concerned about having access to water during the low flow test. New Mexico would like to see some contingencies so water is provided during the test. (Note: Since this meeting, the Bureau of Reclamation has decided not to do mass mailings. Media contacts are being made and public meetings will be held on the low flow test.)

Reports of small group meetings:

CADSWES - There were three requirements to make Colorado's information compatible with Riverware. CADSWES is making the necessary modifications and expect all of them to be completed by the end of February. The Bureau of Reclamation has been working with Colorado to clarify issues on the nomenclature and assumptions in their model and to gain a better understanding of how the model operates.

Model Modifications - Three handouts from Dave King were passed out regarding the Daily Timestep Alternatives; Migration of Remaining TCL Code to New Rules Information, Observations and Suggestions; and Pre-2001 San Juan Rip Rules.

The daily timestep alternatives were reviewed by the Committee. The pros and cons of each alternatives were discussed. The Hydrology Committee decided to implement Alternative 2, Monthly Above, Daily Below. Furthermore, model output will be primarily monthly data and statistical output will be daily.

The Bureau of Reclamation and State of New Mexico - The Bureau met with the State Engineer's Office regarding the differences between municipal and industrial depletions used in the natural flows part of the model. New Mexico is reviewing water rights files to determine monthly depletions instead of annual depletions. Depletions from irrigation will not be done until M&I depletions are figured out. The State of New Mexico will provide acreage and crop-mix for what the depletion is based on.

There are still unresolved issues on getting the natural flows straightened out. New Mexico has sparse data prior to 1970. This is a task on the Workplan and will be addressed at that time.

Irrigated Acreage - Colorado is sending out a request for bid to calculate irrigated acreage on Colorado's western slope using 2000 imagery.

Incidental losses - New Mexico believes that incidental losses should be used for all irrigation needs, not just for certain diversion ditches. Incidental losses do occur with all projects due to evaporation from canals and evapotranspiration from vegetation outside the farmed area that receives water from losses such as canal seepage, spill, runoff and discharge of deep percolation. However, for modeling purposes, historical projects along the river need not and should not consider incidental losses if they were not considered in the natural flow calculation. It was decided that projects that are removed from the river by some distance (e.g. Dolores project) and any new project (e.g. NIIP) should have associated incidental losses, while for historical projects along the river no incidental losses would be taken because they are not now included in the natural flow calculations. New Mexico does not agree with this conclusion, citing changes in irrigation uses in the Lower Animas River valley caused by urbanization over the past forty years that has reduced irrigation consumptive uses and associated incidental depletions. Also, a commitment has been made to redo the natural flow calculation which can include consideration of changes in historic depletions over time.

Navajo Dam Operations and Decision Tree: Ron Bliesner reviewed the decision tree related to whether or not there would be a spring release from Navajo Dam. Based on the January 1 forecast, there would be a spring release. The decision tree will be revisited after the April forecast. The Bureau of Reclamation will notify the City of Farmington seven days in advance of ramping down to lower releases and 24 hours in advance of up to the higher releases to minimize impacts to power supplies.

Workplan Progress Report: Because of the uncertainty of funding for the Program, many tasks were delayed. It is going to be hard to get everything done by the end of the fiscal year.

Task A: Analyze gages - It is now in the Request for Proposal stage. The Bureau of Reclamation has someone in mind to do the work, but they are waiting on a proposal from him.

Task B: CDSS Interface - The State of Colorado is still committed to this task. Colorado needs more information from Dave King before they can proceed.

Task C: Dave King was not available to discuss progress.

Task D: Correct data for 1970-1993 -There was a brief discussion about the data relating to stock ponds and mining operations. Colorado has not included them in their model and consider them to be very small. New Mexico is going to put their own figures together and provide them to everyone. Ron Bliesner will provide the data from NIIP.

Task E: Extend data sets to 1929 - This task has to be completed after Task D.

Discussion on this task was broadened to a bigger question: Will anyone on the Hydrology Committee be able to do work that is shown in the approved 2001 Workplan? After a lot of discussion about the pros and cons of having members do work on the model, the committee voted to allow the Bureau of Reclamation to contract work, as need be, to get the work done. The motion was “The Bureau of Reclamation may contract with anyone they deem qualified to assist with the 2001 Workplan, as approved.” (The vote was seven for and three against the motion.)

Long Range Plan: Errol briefly discussed the Long Range Plan (LRP). Members from the Hydrology Committee are needed for a small task force to help clarify format and level of detail

needed in the LRP. Errol Jensen and Randy Seaholm will represent the Hydrology Committee on this task force. Items to be included in the Long Range Plan should be addressed at the next meeting.

2002 Budget Proposals: The 2002 Workplan needs to be submitted to the Coordination Committee by June. One of the items that should be in the proposal is transfer of technology and training on the model for all participants.

Progress Reports: In the Hydrology Committee proposal, it states that the Committee will update the Coordination Committee on the Progress made that year. This report is due by July 31. A draft should be ready in May for finalization in July.

The discussion on the Hydrology Committee Proposal was reopened to address the discussion on the line under Purpose that states “Review and comment on issues related to channel morphology, and the relationship among flows and geomorphology.” It was suggested in the Coordination Committee that this language be changed to “Review and comment to the Biology Committee on issues related to channel morphology, and the relationship among flows and geomorphology.” The Hydrology Committee voted on the motion “To include “to the Biology Committee” in the bullet discussing geomorphology.” The vote was seven for and three against the inclusion of the words “to the Biology Committee”. ***Further comments on the proposal are to be sent to Randy Seaholm by February 28.***

Set Meeting Date: The next meeting of the Hydrology Committee will be held March 21, 2001, in Farmington, New Mexico. The meeting adjourned.

Other attendees:

Susan Jordan	Nordhaus Law Firm representing Jicarilla Apache Tribe
Dick Kreiner	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Pat Page	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
C. Nancy LaMascus	City of Farmington
Larry Walden	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Bob Norman	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Brooks, Biology Committee Chair	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
David Propst	State of New Mexico
Shirley Mondy, Program Coordinator	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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